United Nations CEDAW/C/TTO/CO/4-7

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the combined fourth to seventh periodic reports of Trinidad and Tobago*

1. The Committee considered the combined fourth to seventh periodic reports of Trinidad and Tobago (CEDAW/C/TTO/4-7) at its 1421st and 1422nd meetings, on 18 July 2016 (see CEDAW/C/SR.1421 and 1422). The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in CEDAW/C/TTO/Q/4-7 and the responses of Trinidad and Tobago are contained in CEDAW/C/TTO/Q/4-7/Add.1.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the submission by the State party of its combined fourth to seventh periodic reports. It also appreciates the State party's written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the pre-sessional working group and welcomes the oral presentation by the delegation and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee.

3. The Committee notes that, owing to financial constraints, the State party's delegation could not travel to Geneva to be present for the consideration of the report and that the dialogue had to be conducted via videoconference. The Committee commends the State party on its high-level delegation, which was headed by the Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs), Ayanna Webster-Roy, and included representatives of the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs), the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development and the Permanent Mission of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

* Adopted by the Committee at its sixty-fourth session (4-22 July 2016).

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B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since its consideration in 2002 of the State party's combined initial to third periodic reports (CEDAW/C/TTO/1-3), in particular the adoption of the following legislation:

(a) Miscellaneous Provisions (Maternity Protection and the Masters and Servants Ordinance) Act (2012), which increases maternity leave from 13 to 14 weeks;

(b) Trafficking in Persons Act (2011), which introduces the offence of trafficking in persons in accordance with the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime;

(c) Occupational Safety and Health Act (2004), which requires employers to provide facilities for female employees and protect the health of pregnant women and "unborn children";

(d) Family Proceedings Act (2004), which defines legal procedures for family matters, including the use of probation officers and mediation.

5. The Committee welcomes the State party's efforts to improve its institutional and policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality, such as the adoption and establishment of the following:

(a) National youth policy, covering the period 2012-2017;

(b) Community education (skills training) programme;

(c) National task force against trafficking in persons, in 2011.

6. The Committee welcomes the fact that, in the period since the consideration of the previous report, the State party has ratified the following international instruments:

(a) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in 2015;

(b) United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, in 2007.

C. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

Parliament

7. The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see the statement by the Committee on its relationship with parliamentarians, adopted at the forty-fifth session, in 2010). It invites Parliament, in line with its mandate, to take the necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the next reporting period under the Convention.

Legal status of the Convention, visibility of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations and implementation of the Convention

8. The Committee notes that the State party adheres to the dualist doctrine of international law, such that treaties must be incorporated into national law for them to be applicable. The Committee also notes the State party's efforts to raise awareness of the provisions of the Convention, including through the media, but remains concerned that those provisions have not been fully incorporated into national law. It is also concerned at information that the provisions of the Convention, the Optional Protocol to the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations are not sufficiently known in the State party, including by judges, lawyers and prosecutors, and that the provisions of the Convention have not been referred to by national courts. The Committee also notes with concern that most of the recommendations made in its previous concluding observations (A/57/38) have not been implemented.

9. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt legislative measures to fully incorporate the provisions of the Convention into national law;**

(b) **Intensify efforts to disseminate information about the Convention, the procedures under the Optional Protocol and the Committee's general recommendations and conduct capacity-building programmes for judges, prosecutors and lawyers on the Convention and the Optional Protocol;**

(c) **Adopt a national action plan on the implementation of the present concluding observations, with clear targets and indicators.**

Definition of discrimination and legislative and policy framework

10. The Committee notes that several laws, such as the Equal Opportunity Act (2000), provide for equality of women and men before the law and prohibit sex-based discrimination, but notes with concern:

(a) The absence of legislation that provides for a comprehensive definition of discrimination against women, encompassing both direct and indirect discrimination in both the public and private spheres in line with article 1 of the Convention;

(b) Discriminatory provisions in the Widows' and Orphans' Pensions Act (1934), the National Insurance Act (1971) and the Industrial Relations Act (1972) and the fact that the State party has not provided a time frame for amending or repealing those laws;

(c) The absence of an inventory of all laws that are discriminatory towards women;

(d) The inordinate delay in formally adopting the draft national policy on gender and development owing to, among other things, protracted consultation processes by successive Governments and the lack of consensus among stakeholders on the understanding of the term "gender" and on provisions relating to sexual and reproductive rights.

11. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendations (A/57/38, part one, paras. 140 and 142) that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt a comprehensive definition of discrimination against women in its national legislation in line with article 1 of the Convention, in order to ensure that women are protected against both direct and indirect discrimination in all spheres of life;**

(b) **As a matter of priority, amend or repeal all discriminatory provisions in the Widows' and Orphans' Pensions Act, the National Insurance Act and the Industrial Relations Act;**

(c) **Develop an inventory of all laws that are discriminatory towards women, with a view to amending or repealing them;**

(d) **Expedite the adoption of the national policy on gender and development, ensure that the definition of the term "gender" is in line with the Convention and, in particular, the Committee's general recommendation No. 28 (2010) on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention and also ensure that issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights are addressed.**

Legal complaint mechanisms and national human rights institution

12. The Committee notes that the Equal Opportunity Commission established under the Equal Opportunity Act, the Police Complaints Authority and the Office of the Ombudsman provide legal remedies enabling women and girls to report violations of their rights. The Committee notes with concern, however, that only a few women and girls have availed themselves of the possibility of filing a complaint with the Commission and that there is a lack of independence in the appointment of members of the Authority. The Committee is also concerned that no institution in the State party has applied for accreditation with the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, formerly known as the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, and that the Office of the Ombudsman itself is not in full conformity with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).

13. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that women have effective access to legal remedies in all parts of the State party by addressing existing barriers and that the Equal Opportunity Commission, the Police Complaints Authority and the Office of the Ombudsman operate independently and impartially. It also recommends that the State party establish a national human rights institution with a broad mandate to promote and protect women's rights that it is in full compliance with the Paris Principles.**

National machinery for the advancement of women

14. The Committee notes that the body responsible for coordinating the advancement of women has again been moved from the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services to the Office of the Prime Minister, where a Minister of State is now in charge of the gender and child affairs portfolio. The Committee also notes that the State party is establishing an interministerial committee on gender equality, a national commission on gender equality and

women's empowerment, and departmental gender focal points. The Committee further notes that the budget allocation for gender-related activities has quadrupled since the consideration of the State party's previous report, in 2002. The Committee is concerned, however, at:

(a) The lack of clarity regarding the structure and roles of the components of the national machinery for the advancement of women and regarding their coordination once they become operational;

(b) The lack of information on the impact of the transformation of the national machinery from a stand-alone ministry to the Gender and Child Affairs Division in the Office of the Prime Minister on the monitoring of gender mainstreaming activities, including gender-responsive budgeting;

(c) The lack of consistent information on the budget allocated to the Gender Affairs Division.

15. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Clarify the cooperation between, once established, the interministerial committee on gender equality, the national commission on gender equality and women's empowerment and the departmental gender focal points with the Gender and Child Affairs Division, and their mandates, to ensure effective coordination;**

(b) **Continue to provide adequate resources for gender-related activities and ensure that the Gender Affairs Division, within the Gender and Child Affairs Division, has adequate human and financial resources to effectively undertake its activities, including gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting;**

(c) **Assess the impact of moving the national machinery for the advancement of women to the Office of the Prime Minister, with a view to ensuring that it can effectively discharge its mandate, and provide in the next periodic report precise information on the budgetary allocation for the Gender Affairs Division, incorporating allocations for both recurrent expenditure and development programmes.**

Temporary special measures

16. The Committee notes the lack of an existing policy or legislative framework for the introduction of temporary special measures in the State party. It is concerned at the State party's lack of understanding of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating substantive equality of women and men. In particular, it is concerned at the absence of such measures, including statutory quotas, to address the underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions in the public and private sectors and to continue to promote their participation in political life, notwithstanding the State party's achievements in this area.

17. **The Committee recommends that the State party adopt and fully enforce legislative provisions on temporary special measures to increase the participation of women in public life, education and employment, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, as a necessary strategy to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality of women and**

men in all areas of the Convention in which women are underrepresented or disadvantaged.

Stereotypes and harmful practices

18. The Committee is concerned at the persistence of harmful practices such as child marriage and of discriminatory stereotypes and deep-rooted patriarchal attitudes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society. The Committee is particularly concerned:

(a) That the State party has no comprehensive strategy to eliminate patriarchal attitudes and discriminatory stereotypes;

(b) That the Marriage Act (1923), the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act (1961), the Hindu Marriage Act (1945) and the Orisa Marriage Act (1999) allow for girls to be married at 12, 14 and 16 years of age, which causes them to drop out of school and exposes them to health risks, including maternal mortality owing to early pregnancy;

(c) That the Children Act (2012), while raising the minimum age of sexual consent to 18 years and criminalizing contraventions, also introduced exemptions under the Marriage Act, the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act, the Hindu Marriage Act and the Orisa Marriage Act, thereby legitimizing child marriage;

(d) That the evaluation of the impact of programmes, such as that on "defining masculinity excellence", and the television series *Gender on Your Agenda: You've Got Male* in eliminating stereotypes and changing attitudes towards the roles of women and men in society has not been completed.

19. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Expand public education programmes on the negative impact of discriminatory stereotypes on women's enjoyment of their rights, in particular in rural areas;**

(b) **Cooperate with the media to educate the general public about and raise awareness of existing sex-based stereotypes that persist at all levels of society, with a view to eliminating them;**

(c) **As a matter of priority, amend the Marriage Act, the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act, the Hindu Marriage Act, the Orisa Marriage Act and the Children Act, which perpetuate the harmful practice of child marriage, by raising the minimum age of marriage to 18 years so that it is harmonized with the age of sexual consent, in line with joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on harmful practices (2014);**

(d) **Regularly monitor and assess the impact of the measures taken to eliminate gender stereotypes and harmful practices such as the programme on "defining masculinity excellence" and the television series *Gender on Your Agenda: You've Got Male*.**

Gender-based violence against women

20. The Committee notes the establishment of a central registry on domestic violence, which was launched in April 2016, but is concerned at:

(a) The high prevalence of gender-based violence against women and girls, such as femicide committed by intimate partners and other forms of domestic violence;

(b) The inadequate number of shelters, notwithstanding continuing efforts to open additional shelters;

(c) The delay in adopting regulations for the Sexual Offences Act (1986), in order to introduce a sex offender registry, which would help to deal with repeat offenders;

(d) Information about the low number of arrests for breaches of protection orders;

(e) Information that training for law enforcement officers is gender neutral and that, although the Cabinet adopted a procedural manual for police officers, law enforcement officers frequently treat domestic violence as a private matter.

21. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Ensure that all cases of gender-based violence against women and girls, in particular femicide and domestic violence, are thoroughly and effectively investigated, that perpetrators are prosecuted and adequately punished and that the Central Registry on Domestic Violence has up-to-date statistical data on cases focusing on all forms of gender-based violence against women, including domestic violence, which should be disaggregated by age, type of offence and the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator;

(b) Undertake a needs assessment to establish the demand for shelters by women who are victims of violence and ensure that shelters are accessible throughout the State party and sufficiently resourced;

(c) As a matter of priority, adopt regulations for the Sexual Offences Act to introduce a sex offender registry, with a view to combating gender-based violence against women by tracking repeat offenders;

(d) Ensure the effective enforcement of protection orders and promptly investigate and punish breaches;

(e) Ensure that training for law enforcement officers focuses on gender-sensitive investigation of cases of gender-based violence against women, including domestic violence, and adopt programmes, including mandatory courses, aimed at eliminating traditional attitudes concerning the treatment of domestic violence as a private matter.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

22. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the Trafficking in Persons Act (2011) and the establishment of a counter-trafficking unit, but is concerned that the State party remains a source, transit and destination country for trafficking. The Committee is particularly concerned at:

(a) The prevalence of trafficking in women and girls for purposes of labour and sexual exploitation;

(b) Information regarding the complicity of public officials, including law enforcement officers, in trafficking offences and at the lack of data on the extent of this phenomenon;

(c) Information that there are no shelters specifically designed for women and girls who are victims of trafficking, who instead are referred to shelters established for women who are victims of violence, including domestic violence;

(d) Information on the complicity of law enforcement officers in the exploitation of women for prostitution, including the running of brothels, even though it is illegal under the Sexual Offences Act to sell and buy sexual services, and at the lack of information on exit programmes for women who wish to leave prostitution.

23. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Intensify efforts to address the root causes of trafficking in women and girls and to ensure the rehabilitation and social integration of victims, including by providing them with legal, medical and psychosocial assistance, and increase awareness-raising programmes aimed at encouraging the reporting of trafficking offences and the early detection of women and girls who are victims of trafficking, as well as their referral to appropriate services;**

(b) **Establish and provide adequate resources for specialized units within existing shelters that focus on the provision of assistance specifically to women and girls who are victims of trafficking;**

(c) **Enforce anti-trafficking legislation by thoroughly investigating, prosecuting and punishing perpetrators, including public officials who are complicit in such crimes and those who aid and abet the exploitation of women and girls in prostitution, and provide data in the next periodic report on the extent of these phenomena;**

(d) **Provide women and girls with alternative income opportunities and introduce rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for women and girls exploited in prostitution, together with exit programmes for those wishing to leave prostitution;**

(e) **Intensify efforts aimed at bilateral, regional and international cooperation to prevent trafficking, including by exchanging information and harmonizing legal procedures to prosecute traffickers, in particular with neighbouring States and other relevant States in the Caribbean Community.**

Participation in political and public life

24. The Committee commends the State party on its achievements in increasing the representation of women in Parliament by more than 30 per cent during the elections held in 2015. It is concerned, however, that those achievements were based on voluntary commitments of political parties to increasing the participation of women in politics and that there are no proposals to have more prescriptive measures to accelerate the participation of women in political life. The Committee is particularly concerned at the lack of information on the representation of women in

the judiciary, senior positions in the diplomatic service, academic institutions and the civil service. The Committee is further concerned that young women who aspire to political office are discouraged by the lack of maternity leave for parliamentarians.

25. **The Committee recommends that the State party introduce measures, including temporary special measures in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations No. 25 (2004) and No. 23 (1997) on women in political and public life, such as a statutory quotas, in order to accelerate the full and equal participation of women in elected and appointed bodies, including the judiciary, senior positions in the diplomatic service and academic institutions. Furthermore, the State party should adopt prescriptive measures in order to preserve the progress achieved in the representation of women in Parliament and to introduce maternity leave for parliamentarians.**

Nationality

26. The Committee notes that the Citizenship of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (Amendment) Act (2000) provides for equal rights for women and men to acquire, change or retain nationality. It also notes the efforts of the State party to ensure birth registration, including by removing fees for obtaining birth certificates and introducing, in 2000, a late registration of birth programme. The Committee is concerned, however, at the lack of information on existing obstacles to birth registration, which may result in women and girls being stateless and vulnerable to trafficking. It is also concerned that there remains a significant number of children whose births are not registered.

27. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure compulsory birth registration to prevent the risk of women and girls, in particular girls in remote areas, becoming stateless and vulnerable to trafficking.**

Education

28. The Committee commends the State party on increasing the age bracket for free and compulsory education through the adoption of the Children Act, which amended the Education Act (1966). It also commends the State party on introducing an adolescent mothers programme in 1996, aimed at, among other things, supporting teenage mothers and assisting with re-entry into school after childbirth. The Committee is concerned, however, at:

(a) The high rate of teenage pregnancy, resulting in girls dropping out of school, and the limited evaluation of the adolescent mothers programme, meaning that no representative data exist to determine its effectiveness in preventing a second pregnancy in adolescents;

(b) The lack of data disaggregated by age and region on the net enrolment rate of girls at the secondary level;

(c) The lack of specific information on measures taken to address the indirect costs of education, which partly account for the high rate at which girls, in particular girls from female-headed households, are dropping out of school;

(d) Information that, notwithstanding the achievements in eliminating sex segregation in fields of study to facilitate women's choice of non-traditional and higher-paying career paths, girls continue to lag behind boys in the field of engineering;

(e) Information that the health and family life education curriculum is often not included at the primary level owing to resistance from parents.

29. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Intensify efforts to provide effective access for women and girls to comprehensive information on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including on the use of modern forms of contraception, in order to reduce the high rate of rate of teenage pregnancy, and undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the adolescent mothers programme in order to assess its effectiveness;**

(b) **Provide, in the next periodic report, data, disaggregated by age and region, on the net enrolment rate of girls at the secondary level and information on specific measures taken to address the indirect costs of education, in particular with regard to girls;**

(c) **Intensify efforts to reduce the dropout rate among girls by facilitating the re-entry into school of young mothers after they have given birth;**

(d) **Continue efforts to encourage girls and young women, as well as boys and young men, to choose non-traditional fields of study and career paths, in particular engineering courses, and implement programmes aimed at counselling girls on the full range of educational choices;**

(e) **Intensify the provision of the health and family life education curriculum and ensure that age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including comprehensive sex education for adolescent girls and boys covering responsible sexual behaviour, continues to be systematically integrated into school curricula at all levels.**

Employment

30. The Committee commends the State party on being one of the first countries to enact legislation on counting unremunerated work (1996) and on its efforts to improve the labour participation of women. The Committee is concerned, however, at:

(a) The limited labour participation of women, notwithstanding their high attainment rates in education;

(b) The wide gender wage gap and persistent occupational segregation in the labour market, where women are often engaged in temporary work, and the lack of an explicit provision guaranteeing the principle of equal pay for work of equal value;

(c) The limited progress made in amending the Industrial Relations Act to include domestic workers in the definition of a worker;

(d) The fact that, notwithstanding the concentration of women in domestic work in private households, the State party has not ratified the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), of the International Labour Organization;

(e) Information that, notwithstanding the establishment of a steering committee for action against discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace, a national study on the matter has not been conducted and, therefore, very limited progress has been made in adopting legislation providing for remedies for sexual harassment in the workplace.

31. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Intensify efforts to gradually transform and reduce the informal sector of employment through, among other things, the provision of vocational and technical training, to eliminate structural inequalities and occupational segregation and to reduce the gender wage gap by guaranteeing and enforcing the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in all sectors;**

(b) **As a matter of priority, amend the Industrial Relations Act to include domestic workers in the definition of a worker;**

(c) **Consider ratifying the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), of the International Labour Organization;**

(d) **Adopt legislation providing for effective remedies for sexual harassment in the workplace, collect statistical data on the extent of the problem of sex discrimination in the workplace, including cases of sexual harassment, and conduct regular labour inspections aimed at enforcing compliance with labour laws.**

Health

32. The Committee commends the State party on its successful programmes aimed at preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV by providing access to antiretroviral treatment. It remains concerned, however, at the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS among women and girls between 15 and 24 years of age, and that 50 per cent of new HIV infections occur in women and girls. The Committee is also concerned at the lack of information on the incidence of unsafe abortion and its impact on women's health, including maternal mortality. The Committee is further concerned that, under the Offences against the Person Act (1925), abortion is criminalized, without exceptions on grounds such as severe foetal impairment and when the pregnancy results from rape or incest.

33. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 24 (1999) on women and health, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Continue to scale up the provision of free antiretroviral treatment to all women and men living with HIV and to pregnant women in order to prevent mother-to-child transmission;**

(b) **Address the root causes of the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS among women and girls between 15 and 24 years of age through, among other things, the implementation of preventive strategies to combat HIV and the provision of information on sexual and reproductive services and modern contraceptives;**

(c) **Provide, in the next periodic report, data, disaggregated by age and region, on the incidence of unsafe abortion and the impact on women's health, including maternal mortality;**

(d) **Amend the Offences against the Person Act to legalize abortion in cases of rape, incest and severe foetal impairment and to decriminalize abortion in all other cases.**

Economic and social benefits

34. The Committee notes the State party's efforts to implement strategies aimed at poverty reduction, such as a targeted conditional cash transfer programme and a microenterprise loan facility. It is concerned, however, at:

(a) The lack of information on the effectiveness of the efforts in reducing poverty among women and girls, in particular in female-headed households;

(b) Information that, although under the law women and men enjoy equal access to loans, some private banks discriminate against women, in particular unmarried women, in their lending policies;

(c) Information that the provision of skills training, including the craft training programme for women, focuses on traditionally female-dominated fields and that training in non-traditional fields is not systematically offered.

35. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Intensify its efforts to reduce poverty by facilitating women's access to financial credit and loans;**

(b) **Investigate the extent to which private banks engage in discriminatory practices against women, in particular unmarried women, in their lending policies;**

(c) **Provide, in the next periodic report, information on the status of female-headed households and how they benefit from the State party's poverty reduction programmes, including the targeted conditional cash transfer programme and the microenterprise loan facility.**

Rural women and natural disasters

36. The Committee notes the State party's efforts to eradicate poverty in rural areas, including through the introduction of a community development fund and an agricultural incentive programme. It notes the delegation's response that disaster risk reduction and climate change are addressed in the draft national policy on gender and development. The Committee is concerned, however, at the lack of information on the overall situation of rural women and their participation in the development of policies and strategies in all matters having an impact on their life, in particular with regard to disaster risk reduction and climate change considering that the State party lies in the hurricane belt.

37. **The Committee recommends that the State party provide, in the next periodic report, information on the overall situation of rural women and the results of the study aimed at gathering national agricultural data, disaggregated by sex, to identify the gender differential with regard to ownership, earnings, marketing and other aspects of agriculture, as well as access to other services such as education, health and employment. It also recommends that the State party ensure that the development and implementation of policies and programmes on disaster risk reduction and**

climate change, in addition to other emergencies, are based on a comprehensive gender analysis and that such policies and programmes take into account vulnerable but productive groups of women, such as rural women. It further recommends that the State party ensure the participation of women at the decision-making level in the design and implementation of policies and programmes, including those relating to climate change and disasters.

Disadvantaged groups of women

38. The Committee is concerned about the situation of female-headed households, widows, older women and women with disabilities, who often suffer intersecting forms of discrimination, especially with regard to access to employment, health care and social services. It notes with regret the limited information provided by the State party in this regard.

39. **The Committee requests the State party to include, in the next periodic report, detailed information, including disaggregated data and information on specific programmes and achievements, on the situation of female headed-households, widows, older women and women with disabilities.**

Marriage and family relations

40. The Committee is concerned at the lack of information on the economic consequences of divorce for women and girls.

41. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 29 (2013) on the economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution, the Committee recommends that the State party undertake a comprehensive study of the economic consequences of divorce for women and girls.**

Optional Protocol to the Convention

42. **The Committee encourages the State party to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention and to accept, as soon as possible, the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee.**

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

43. **The Committee calls upon the State party to use the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in its efforts to implement the provisions of the Convention.**

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

44. **The Committee calls for the realization of substantive gender equality, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, throughout the process of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.**

Dissemination

45. **The Committee requests the State party to ensure the timely dissemination of the present concluding observations, in the official language of the State party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (national, regional**

and local), in particular to the Government, the ministries, Parliament and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation.

Ratification of other treaties

46. The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments[1] would enhance the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The Committee therefore encourages the State party to consider ratifying the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and other core human rights treaties that it has not yet ratified.

Technical assistance

47. The Committee recommends that the State party consider seeking international assistance and cooperation and availing itself of technical assistance in the development and implementation of a comprehensive programme aimed at the implementation of the above recommendations and the Convention as a whole. The Committee also calls upon the State party to continue its cooperation with specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations system.

Follow-up to the concluding observations

48. The Committee requests the State party to provide written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 9 (c), 11 (c) and 19 (c) above within two years and paragraph 11 (d) within one year.

Preparation of the next report

49. The Committee invites the State party to submit its eighth periodic report in July 2020.

50. The Committee requests the State party to follow the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents (HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6, chap. I).

[1] The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.